



Puerto Rico Amateur Radio League, Inc.

An A.R.R.L. Special Service Club

PO Box 191917, San Juan, P.R. 00919-1917



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March 12, 1995 **RECEIVED**

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FCC MAIL ROOM

Re: Comments on
Docket 96-2
RM-8165

Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

Gentlemen:

The Puerto Rico Amateur Radio League, Inc. understands that the Arecibo Observatory is an important facility that provides radio astronomy capabilities that are unique. For this reason amateurs in Puerto Rico have always cooperated with the facility and have diligently helped resolve any undue interference problems.

The PRARL, Inc. has agreed, as a matter of goodwill and in an informal fashion, to supply at the Observatory's request any available information in our records related to "band plan" frequencies used by amateur radio repeaters in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. We have always worked, and will continue to do so, with the Observatory in the identification of any station signals causing unacceptable interference within the frequencies assigned to amateurs under Part 97 of the Regulations. There is a long history of cooperation and to this date we have not experienced any serious Observatory/Amateur interference problems.

We must clearly state that the Puerto Rico Amateur Radio League, Inc. (PRARL) nor the PR/VI Volunteer Frequency Coordinators, Inc. or any existing coordinating organization in the United States, are vested with authority to require amateurs to notify the installation of amateur stations. The FCC Part 97 only mentions the coordination activity in an informal manner in §97.3(2).

In reference to FCC 96-12 we have the following comments:

36. Five years ago, the PRARL foreseeing the future need for a responsible coordination entity, promoted the organization of the "Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands Volunteer Frequency Coordinators, Inc.", an organization incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

This organization operates in the same fashion as the Volunteer Examiners Coordinators (VEC) but is not recognized officially by the FCC. In June 1991 it was organized with the vote of the majority of the repeater trustees and the amateur community. The PRARL and the PR/VI have a gentleman's agreement with the Observatory and maintains a history of cooperation since its establishment. It must be clearly understood that none of the two above-mentioned organizations have a vested power to enforce Part 97 although our relations with the local FCC Field Office is excellent and have always received their total cooperation.

We strongly recommend that the FCC consider the possibility of establishing a "repeater frequency coordination program" similar to the VEC program. (Subpart F §97.509, etc.) In the case of Puerto Rico, such a program exists in an unofficial manner and has proven its effectiveness for five years.

39. "(1) The notification to the Interference Office, Arecibo Observatory shall be made prior to, or simultaneously with, the filing of the application with the commission..)".

The Commission must consider that amateur radio station licenses are granted in combination with the operator's license. Users of the Amateur Radio Service do not have to file applications for new or modified stations with the Commission. Therefore, proposed language for Section 90.177 (1) is not proper. (Page 7 of FCC Docket 96-12)

Amateur repeaters operate at low power and are no different from the Civil Air Patrol repeaters which are exempt from this proposal. There is no mention of the Military Amateur Radio System (MARS) that could also cause the same type of problems to the Observatory. None of these services require filings with the FCC. Amateurs use omnidirectional antennas which normally radiate well below the angle of reception of the Observatory antenna which is not capable of looking at the horizon.

If this proposed docket is approved, there is no possible control unless the reporting, record keeping and compliance requirements are varied. There would be a considerable additional information collection process involved.


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We strongly suggest that reference to Part 97 be removed from the proposed rule making and that the Arecibo Observatory continue to work with Amateur Radio Service organizations in resolving any possible interference problems as in the past. Our long history of cooperation with Cornell has proven that there is no need for further generation of records, rules and paperwork.

A copy of our letter dated 2/20/93 to the Arecibo Observatory Frequency Manager, Mr. Willem A. Baan related to this matter is included as part of the above comments.

We respectfully request that our comments be considered before action is taken by the Commission.

Cordially,



Victor Madera-KP4PQ
Secretary

Enclosure

cc: C. Imlay, ARRL General Counsel
Dorothy Conway FCC
Timothy Fain OMB DO
Thomas P. Derenge EE FCC



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PO Box 191917, San Juan, P.R. 00919-1917



February 20, 1993

Dr. Willem A. Baan
Frequency Manager
Arecibo Observatory
Arecibo, P.R. 00612

COPY

Dear Dr. Baan:

This letter confirms our telephone conversation related to the Petition for Rulemaking filed by Cornell University with the Federal Communications Commission. I want to make clear that the Puerto Rico amateur community understands the scientific efforts being made by Cornell and the Arecibo Observatory and in no way would act against the work being performed for the benefit and advancement of science. As a fact, the studies done in Arecibo are of great interest to our community.

Your petition is of concern mainly in respect to Part 97. It appears to be a very restrictive request and is directed to the amateur community who normally operates with low power and using equipment that meets strict FCC rules. Spurious emissions are well below the mean power of the fundamentals (usually 60-65 dB) and cavities reduce or cancel any potential interference. Operation is mainly in the 144/146 MHz bands.

As we discussed, the mountains shield the signals and you accept that stations in San Juan, Fajardo, Mayaguez and other distant points will not affect your operation and "you will not even bother reviewing such petitions".

Amateurs normally use omni directional antennas which radiate well below the angle of reception of the observatory antenna which is not capable of looking at the horizon. Equipment outside a very short radius of the Arecibo site will most probably not cause any problems. We all know that a significant amount of funds have been assigned to improve the observatory and attenuate external interference thus further reducing such possibility.

Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have a very active and effective frequency coordination organization composed of members of the Amateur community. We have no record of having received one single complaint on interference from amateur sources and your petition does not mention any research done on this matter.

We strongly believe that Cornell's petition is extremely restrictive and exceeds necessary protection. Your request does not describe any underlying reason for covering such a large area.

"To Serve and Honor Amateur Radio"

Dr. Willem A. Baan

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A reasonable alternative would be for the Observatory to coordinate any complaints via the Coordinating Organization. This would effectively solve any interference problems caused by amateurs and save money, time and efforts by your personnel who will be forced to review and process all petitions within 20 days. The Amateur Radio Service in turn, will not be burdened without just cause with further delays in processing petitions. We have contacted the American Radio Relay League and they will probably contact Cornell and the FCC on this matter.

In reference to your invitation, we will gladly organize the visit on a date of your choice. Please contact me as soon as you return from your trip to coordinate the activity. I am sure amateurs will enjoy the visit and learn more about the work being done at the Observatory.

Cordially,

Victor Madera - KP4PQ
Secretary

cc: F. Butler ARRL
G. Bonet PR/VI VFC